

Chief Planning Officer  
Folkestone & Hythe District Council  
Folkestone  
CT20 2QY

25 September 2025

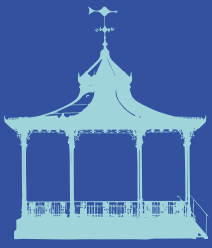
## Comment on planning application

<b>Reference no:</b>	<b>25/1530/FH</b>
<b>Site address:</b>	12 Sandgate Road, Folkestone, CT20 1DP
<b>Proposal:</b>	Part change of use to rear of existing ground floor retail unit (Class E) to residential use (C3) to create 1 x 1-bed apartment, including alterations to the remaining retail unit to create 2 x smaller retail units
<b>Officer:</b>	Robert Allan
<b>Stance:</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

The New Folkestone Society's planning sub-committee considered the above application at a meeting on 23 September 2025 and would like to make the following comments:

- The Society has often stated that there is not a lack of desire for shops in the town centre, as is sometimes suggested. Small to medium-sized shops that come on the market tend to be occupied relatively quickly. The issue that leads to people suggesting there are empty shops tends to be the larger units remaining vacant for long periods. We, therefore, welcome the division of larger shops where they have not had any interest.
- Whilst this proposal is, therefore, interesting in that it creates two smaller shops, we are somewhat nervous as to whether the size of the units is a little too small for high street frontage. Both shops have just over 150m<sup>2</sup> floorspace, a very small storage area and bathroom. Unlike the present shop, there is no kitchen area – nor is there any office space. Were the shop in Cheriton, there would be a requirement per Policy RL5 to prove it has been actively marketed at a reasonable rate for 12 months with no interest; the shop is presently still operating and has not been put on the market. This could be an exciting use of the



space, although careful consideration needs to be given where such an irreversible decision is to be made.

- Although there is no Conservation Area in the pedestrian precinct, the upper floors of the premises have an attractive appearance that is currently somewhat let down by a more modern shop frontage. It would be preferable, therefore, if the two shop units could have a more traditional look.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Hourahane  
Chair, New Folkestone Society planning sub-committee